Amendments

Please amend the specification as follows:

<u>In the claims:</u>

1. (currently amended) A method for verifying the identities of new users of a computer system, using ~~batch~~ similarity searching, comprising:

a. receiving a plurality of records, each record containing profile data input by a new user;

b. similarity searching the profile data of each record against suspended-users profile data;

c. receiving a similarity search result set;

d. determining, for each record, whether a positive <u>similarity</u> match or a negative <u>similarity</u> match exists between the profile data of the record and the suspended-users profile data <u>based on the similarity search result set</u>;

e. allowing a new user to access the computer system, where a negative <u>similarity</u> match is determined between the record of the new user and the suspended-users profile data; and

f. forwarding the record of a new user to a review process, where a positive <u>similarity</u> match is determined between the record of the new user and the suspended-users profile data, the review process comprising:

    i. confirming whether the positive <u>similarity</u> match exists between the profile data of the record and the suspended-users profile data;

    ii. allowing the new user to access the computer system, where the positive <u>similarity</u> match is not confirmed; and

    iii. denying the new user access to the computer system, where the positive <u>similarity</u> match is confirmed.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining a positive or negative similarity match further comprises:

assigning a match score to each similarity search result set; and

comparing the match score to a pre-determined match tolerance level.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of denying a new user access to the computer system comprises permanently denying the new user access to the computer system.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of denying a new user access to the computer system comprises temporarily denying the new user access to the computer system for a pre-determined period.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving a plurality of records further comprises creating an account for each new user.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving a plurality of records further comprises receiving a plurality of records into a production new-user database.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, further comprising updating a new-users profile database, with profile data from each new-user record received into the production new-users database, before the step of similarity searching.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising updating a suspended-users profile database, containing suspended-user profile data, with additional suspended-user profile data stored in a production-suspended-users database, before the step of similarity searching.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the step of similarity searching further comprises similarity searching the new-user profile data against the suspended-users profile database, via a batch similarity search engine.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the positive response process further comprises relaying the new-user record to a user-review database, before the step of confirming at least one positive similarity match.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of displaying the user-review database via a web-based interface, after the step of relaying the new-user record to a user-review database and before the step of confirming at least one positive similarity match.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A method for verifying identities of new users of a computer system, using batch similarity searching, comprising:

    a. receiving a plurality of records into a production new-user database, each record comprising profile data input by a new user;

    b. updating a new-users profile database, with profile data from each record received into the production new-users database;

    c. updating a suspended-users profile database, containing suspended-user profile data, with additional suspended-user profile data stored in a production-suspended-users database;

    d. relaying the new-user profile data from the new-user profile database to a batch similarity search engine;

    e. similarity searching the new-user profile data against the suspended-users profile database, via the batch similarity search engine;

    f. receiving at least one similarity search result set;

    g. determining, for each record, whether a positive similarity match or a negative similarity match exists between the profile data of the record and the suspended-users profile data based on the similarity search result set;

h. allowing a new user to access the computer system, where a negative <u>similarity</u> match is determined between the record of the new user and the suspended-users profile data; and

j. forwarding the record of a new user to a review process, where a positive <u>similarity</u> match is determined between the record of the new user and the suspended-users profile data, the review process comprising:

    i. confirming whether the positive <u>similarity</u> match exists between the profile data of the record and the suspended-users profile data;

    ii. allowing the new user to access the computer system, where the positive <u>similarity</u> match is not confirmed; and

    iii. denying the new user access to the computer system, and forwarding the profile data from the new-user record to the production suspended-users database, where the positive <u>similarity</u> match is confirmed.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of receiving a plurality of new-user records into a production new-user database further comprises creating an account for each new user.

15. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of updating the new-users profile database further comprises importing the production new-users database into the new-users profile database.

16. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of updating the suspended-users profile database further comprises importing the production suspended-users database into the suspended-users profile database.

17. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of formulating the new-user profile data into at least one search command, after the step of updating the new-users profile database and before the step of similarity searching.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of determining a positive or negative similarity match further comprises:

assigning a match score to each similarity search result set; and

comparing the match score to a pre-determined match tolerance level.

19. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein a similarity search result set is received for each new-user record searched.

20. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein one similarity search result set is received for all new-user records searched.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the positive response process further comprises relaying the new-user record to a user-review database, before the step of confirming at least one positive similarity match.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of displaying the user-review database via a web-based interface, after the step of relaying the new-user record to a user-review database and before the step of confirming at least one positive similarity match.

23. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of denying a new user access to the computer system comprises permanently denying the new user access to the computer system.

24. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of denying a new user access to the computer system comprises temporarily denying the new user access to the computer system for a pre-determined period.

25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A system for verifying identities of new users of a computer system, using ~~batch~~ similarity searching, comprising:

    means for receiving records from a plurality of new users;

    means for extracting new-user profile data from each record;

    means for similarity searching the new-user profile data against suspended-users profile data;

    means for receiving similarity search results sets;

    means for determining whether a positive similarity match or a negative similarity match exists between the new-user profile data of each record and the suspended-users profile data;

    means for allowing a new user to access the computer system, where a negative similarity match exists; and

    means for reviewing the record of a new user, where a positive similarity match exists between the record and suspended-users profile data, comprising:

        means for confirming whether the positive similarity match exists between the record and suspended-users profile data;

        means for allowing the new user to access the computer system, where the positive similarity match is not confirmed; and

        means for denying the new user access to the computer system, where the positive similarity match is confirmed.

27. (new) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to implement the method of claim 1.

28. (new) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to implement the method of claim 13.

29. (new) A method for verifying the identities of new users of a computer system using similarity searching, comprising:

similarity searching one or more new user profile data records against suspended-users profile data records;

receiving one or more similarity search results sets, each result set having a corresponding new user profile data record and a corresponding similarity match score;

comparing each similarity match score with a pre-determined match tolerance level;

for each negative similarity match score having a value of less than or equal to the pre-determined match tolerance level, allowing access to the computer system by a new user associated with a new user profile data record corresponding to a negative similarity match score; and

for each positive similarity match score having a value greater than the pre-determined match tolerance level, denying access to the computer system by a new user associated with a new user profile data record corresponding to a positive similarity match score.

30. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein the step of denying access comprises:

confirming whether the positive similarity match score exists between the new user profile data record and a corresponding suspended-users profile data record;

allowing a new user associated with a new user profile data record corresponding to a positive similarity match score to access the computer system, where the positive similarity match score is not confirmed; and

denying a new user associated with a new user profile data record corresponding to a positive similarity match score access to the computer system, where the positive similarity match score is confirmed.